



Democratic & Central Services

Governance Services

4th Floor (West)

Civic Hall

Leeds LS1 1UR

To: All Members of Council

Contact Name: Kevin Tomkinsone-mail:

Kevin.tomkinson@leeds.gov.uk

Direct Line: (0113) 2474357

Fax: (0113) 3951599

Your ref:

Our Ref: A61/kjt/quest

Date: 15 November 2013

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL MEETING – 13th November 2013

At the above meeting, the thirty minutes of Question Time expired with questions 9 to 17 unanswered. Council Procedure Rule 11.6 requires that each Member of Council is sent responses to such questions.

Q9 Councillor A Lamb - Does the Executive Board Member for Development and the Economy have full confidence in his part night streetlighting programme?

A The part-night street lighting programme has been carefully designed to minimise the impact by selecting only the street lights that are little used in terms of frequency of street use, fear of crime and the potential for road accidents during the period midnight to 5:30am. A specific set of exception criteria are applied during assessment of each group of street lights. The current proposals will leave 84,000 of our 92,000 street lights permanently on.

A process of engaging with Ward Members has been developed that provides the detail of the proposed street lights to be affected around 3 to 4 weeks before any changes are made. If from local knowledge any ward member believes that the exception criteria are met at any particular location then feedback is welcomed. Current work is on traffic routes. As we move into the more residential areas then specific engagement briefings will be offered.

We have substantially completed the roll-out on traffic routes in Garforth and Swillington and Adel and Wharfedale, now working in Otley and Yeadon and will soon be starting in Kippax and Methley and Ardsley and Robin Hood. We are following roughly the same sequence as the initial PFI renewal roll-out programme. The programme will be repeated with the more residential streets commencing in the Spring/Summer next year.

There are currently 158 street lights converted to part-night operation .

We are working with stakeholders in the emergency services and Safer Leeds to closely monitor the impact of these proposals as they progress around the city.

By comparison with other authorities (who have been doing this for some time) we are taking a relatively cautious approach. Experience in other authorities has shown that when approached sensibly there has been little or no impact on crime and road traffic accidents.

Background on other authorities:

**NUMBER OF STREET LIGHTS
PART NIGHT SWITCHED BY
SOME OTHER AUTHORITIES**

Authority	No of St Lights	Part Night Switched	%age	off	on
Derbyshire	89,000	49000	55.06%	00:00	05:30
Warwickshire	49,000	39000	79.59%	00:00	05:30
Essex	130,000	91000	70.00%	00:00	05:30
North Somerset	22,500	18000	80.00%	00:00	05:30
Dorset	40,000	21000	52.50%	00:00	05:30
Norfolk	51,000	20000	39.22%	00:00	05:30
Shropshire	20,000	14000	70.00%	00:00	05:30
Kirklees (trial)	51,000	2000	3.92%	00:00	05:30
South Gloucestershire	30,000	18000	60.00%	00:00	05:30
Leicestershire	66,000	40000	60.61%	00:00	05:30
Leeds	92,000	8000	8.70%	00:00	05:30
Totals	640,500	320000	49.96%	00:00	05:30

Q10 Councillor B Cleasby - Does the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services agree with me that meetings between Ward Councillors and planning officers are valuable in ensuring Cllrs are properly briefed, along the lines of the proposed new protocol, and that they should be minuted?

A Yes, meetings between Ward Members and planning officers are a valuable part of the planning process and are promoted as good practice in the Council's *Planning Code of Good Practice*, 2013, which encourages members to request briefings from officers on applications.

In line with the draft officer member communications protocol, officers will make arrangements for meetings and briefings with members and keep members informed on pre-application enquiries, new applications and provide updates on the progress of applications, as appropriate.

Brief notes will be kept of all meetings and circulated, to safeguard the interests of all parties and to reduce the risk of future challenge.

Q11 Councillor S Hamilton - Does the Executive Member responsible for planning agree that national policy needs to be directed at preventing developers from unnecessarily holding on to land?

A Yes. Our frequently expressed concerns that some developers are 'land banking' consents now appears to be adopted by Government. We are now seeing an increase in activity across many sectors and that is coupled in Leeds with a challenging housing target to deliver as we seek to grow the city.

On 8 November the Planning Minister Nick Boles announced that developers must start building homes or lose permission. The temporary measure of allowing Extension of time applications will be scrapped but no timescale has been given yet as to when this will come into effect.

The Leader of the Opposition has announced a review into housing which will include looking at whether fining developers for not bringing land forward or purchasing land from developers would help ensure that land with planning permission is developed. The outcome of this review is expected within one year.

The precise form of these announcements will be critical in determining whether the Council's concerns are met.

Locally the City Council with both the interim affordable housing policy and the more recent Executive Board approval to interim guidance on the release of PAS land have sought to ensure that implementation is within 2 years of permission.

Q12 Councillor M Iqbal - Would the Executive Member for Development and Economy agree that evidence shows that Leeds' retail offer continues to go from strength to strength?

A Yes, the evidence does support the statement that Leeds' retail offer continues to go from strength to strength.

Footfall:

- Footfall in the city centre has been increasing since the opening of Trinity Leeds in March 2013. Total footfall has increased by 3.2% compared to the same period last year. This is an increase in footfall of over 1 million, (against a backdrop of national reductions in town/city centre footfall).
- Kirkgate market has also seen increases in footfall, up 2.2% this year compared to the same period last year. Whilst different weeks show a range of performance, overall the footfall by month has bettered the same month last year. 9million visitors are expected to the indoor market in 2013.

Vibrancy

- Leeds city centre has recently been named the 5th most vibrant place in the UK in a report by retail data experts, Experian. This builds on a successful year with the opening of the £300m Trinity Leeds shopping centre and the £60m First Direct Arena.

Centre for Cities report: Beyond the High Street

- This report showed that jobs have been concentrating within Leeds city centre, with more than a quarter of all private sector jobs located in the city centre, highlighting its importance within the city region. Leeds also comes third in the UK in a ranking of cities based on the total number of jobs in the city centre.

Impact of Trinity Leeds on the city centre

- Trinity Leeds was designed to create 2,300 new jobs for people in Leeds, and contribute an extra £80 million to the Leeds economy in 2014.
- 1 million square feet of retail, cafes/restaurants added to city centre offer (120 individual units).
- Footfall to date in Trinity Leeds is 13million.

However, it is important to note that while Leeds city centre's retail offer continues to go from strength to strength, town and district centres across the Leeds district continue to suffer the effects of changes in the retail market, such as competition from large supermarkets and the growth of internet shopping.

We are committed to doing more to assist the town and district centres around Leeds that are struggling.

Q13 Councillor D Cohen - When the Executive Member for Development and the Economy said back in March this year that he wanted the revamp of Kirkgate Market to take place "as quickly as possible", what timescale did he have in mind?

A I am aware that since the Executive Board took the decision to proceed with proposals for the improvement and refurbishment of Kirkgate Market, it may appear that there has been little progress. I can assure members that this is not the case and I would take the opportunity to outline what has been happening in the intervening period.

1. Design Progress

- We have retained the NPS Group Leeds to provide a multi-disciplinary design team to develop the scheme proposals to the completion of RIBA Stage D (detailed design), with a view to reaching design freeze early in the New Year at which point a report will come back to Executive Board for formal approval.
- At the present, the team design team has completed the outline design proposals and the Markets Management Team and the design team are now in a position to reveal more detail of the proposed. Discussions have been held with all the butchers about their requirements in a new 'fish and meat' zone and the first meeting with all traders was held on 11th November 2013, with a further follow up meeting scheduled for 18th November to update them on progress and to discuss the proposed phasing of the works, with further more detailed meetings with groups of traders and individuals to be arranged.

- In order to help inform both design proposals and the phasing arrangements, we have procured contractor buildability advice. It is intended that the contractor will advise the design team of practical issues associated with the works in the Market, to ensure that they may be undertaken safely, whilst causing minimum disruption to both traders and customers.
- The design team advise that the total project cost remains estimated at £12.3m as previously advised to Executive Board in March 2013.
- In terms of moving forward, the indicative programme is as follows:
 - o Presentation of detailed design proposals to Executive Board early in the new year.
 - o If scheme supported by Executive Board, submission of detailed planning and Listed Building Application in Spring 2014.
 - o Out to tender for the refurbishment works in Autumn 2014 – with a start on site early in 2015.

Q14 Councillor S Bentley - What were the total costs incurred by the council in cleaning up following bonfire events in Leeds Parks and for the clean up of the city centre required after the 2013 Leeds Festival, and which departments are responsible for bearing the cost?

A The cost for the parks bonfire clean up is £1,788. The cost is the responsibility of Parks and Countryside service in Environment and Housing department.

City Centre Clean Up costs

To ensure an effective clean-up of the City Centre following the Leeds Festival, the Environmental Action Service took the decision to redirect its staff to prioritise the clean up over the normal duties of cleansing staff in this period.

The estimated cost of the resources used in the clean-up, based on the staff and vehicles used in the City Centre over the period Monday 26th to Wednesday 28th August was £6k.

In this context, the cost of the clean-up is therefore considered an opportunity cost, i.e. the Council may not have incurred additional spend, but it used resources to the value of £6k to restore the cleanliness of the City Centre.

Q15 Councillor A Khan - Would the Executive Member for Environment and Parks please update the Council on the recycling targets and the current rates being achieved in the city?

A For the period of April to July 2013, recycling performance was 47.4% of household waste, which represents an increase of 3.1% compared to the same period last year.

The final outturn for 2012/13 was 40.1%, and based on the latest data, which takes account of the full year effects of the phasing in of alternate weekly collections and reduced volumes of waste at the household waste recycling sites following the implementation of the van and trailer permit scheme, the Service is currently projecting a final recycling rate of around 44%-45% for this financial year.

Latest national figures show that the UK as a whole achieved 43.2% for 2012/13. Leeds, as a Core City, therefore compares well with this national performance level, and continues to improve as outlined above.

The Council continues to work towards its target of 55% recycling by 2016. The main challenge remains around the affordability of weekly food waste collections, and the Waste Strategy team continue with feasibility work around more efficient food waste collection models, anaerobic digestion and bio-methane applications, including seeking sources of potential external funding.

Q16 Councillor B Anderson - Can the Executive Member with responsibility for the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy please advise Council what enhancements/improvements he intends introducing for the coming winter period?

A Last winter was a particularly onerous one for the council and resulted in us doing a record 114 gritting treatments to combat the effects of the winter weather. We also came very close to running out of salt as cold conditions persisted into April.

As is the case each year, at the end of the last winter period, Highway Maintenance carried out an extensive review to look at the overall resilience of the service.

As a result, we have made provision for using 30,000 tonnes of salt this year, this is 5,000 tonnes more than allocated in previous years. Measures are also being put in place to make the best use of non-highways labour resources such as refuse drivers and loaders to help out in snow conditions when round the clock working is essential to keep the city moving.

In addition officers have been in discussions with elected members representing the Outer North West area regarding the purchase of another quad bike gritter, specifically for use in key locations in the ONW area.

The only change to the written Winter Service Plan is the addition of the quad bike gritters which were used for the first time last year to carry out precautionary gritting of heavily used city centre footways, and to plough and grit footways in other regional centre areas. The quad bikes proved to be a very effective and useful addition to winter service operations last year.

Our overall aim is to deliver the Winter Service Plan in an efficient manner by using as much of the council's available resources as possible.

Q17 Councillor A Lamb - Could the Executive Member for Leisure inform Council how much the art installation in Woodhouse Tunnel cost?

A The cost of the artwork in the underpass from Woodhouse car park was £14,660.

This installation is part of a total arena scheme which has a total budget of £81,098,000 and has included the development of a world class facility and the full refurbishment of Woodhouse Lane Multi Storey Car Park. The total scheme has been delivered on time and under budget.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Tomkinson
Principal Governance Officer